



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

For Immediate Release:

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Holiday Package Thieves Sentenced to Jail

Two package thieves, arrested last December in their truckful of stolen holiday deliveries from Columbia homes, will be spending the coming months in jail. Amjad Jaouni, 29, of the 1600 block of W. Lombard Street in Baltimore was sentenced to four months in jail by Howard County Circuit Court Judge Richard S. Bernhardt this morning. The judge also sentenced Ernest Ohanyan, 26, of the 2900 block of Marnat Road in Baltimore to five months in jail.

On December 7, 2016, a concerned citizen called 911 to report that a suspicious box truck was driving around their neighborhood and that the occupants of the truck were removing packages from neighbors' homes. Three Howard County police officers were in the area and heard the call over their police radios. They quickly responded, with the first officer arriving on-scene within a minute. They located and stopped the truck and found 75 packages inside, stolen from along 15 nearby streets. Both suspects were arrested and subsequently pleaded guilty to a single count of theft scheme between \$1,000 to under \$10,000 on August 7, 2017.

During this morning's sentencing hearing Assistant State's Attorney Susan Weinstein stated that the crime "was driven by pure greed and nothing else. It would be appropriate that both Mr. Jaouni and Mr. Ohanyan spend this holiday season in jail." The defense attorney for the two men presented character witnesses including family and employers. He argued against jail time, stating that "no one lost anything." Howard County police made personal deliveries of the recovered stolen parcels on December 8 and facilitated pickups of packages that were unable to be delivered. The two men expressed remorse for their actions.

Judge Bernhardt did not view the theft as a victimless crime nor as a single act. He noted that 75 packages were stolen from 50 different residences, primarily from cul-de-sacs along Tamar Drive in the Columbia village of Long Reach. The judge sentenced Jaouni to a flat 120-day sentence in jail and issued a work release order. He sentenced Ohanyan to an 18-month sentence, suspending all but five months in jail and ordered him to pay court costs. Upon his release Ohanyan faces two years of supervised probation.

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